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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **LA LAKER METTA WORLD PEACE & LACDMH TEAM UP FOR NEW COUNTYWIDE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS CAMPAIGN** *The 4-week billboard and poster campaign, featuring the NBA star, begins on Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup>.*

**Los Angeles, CA – Metta World Peace** of the Los Angeles Lakers and the **Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH)** have partnered once again to promote mental health awareness, especially among young adults, during May. May is designated nationally by President Barack Obama, as well as locally in Los Angeles County, as Mental Health Awareness Month. Funded by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), this campaign also supports the national effort and launch of the lime green ribbon which signifies mental health awareness.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) campaign starts **Monday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2013**. It will run throughout Los Angeles County for four weeks with billboards and posters on MTA shelters, depots, buses and trains. The campaign features Metta World Peace and the call-to-action message, *“Talk It Out!”* The billboards, bulletins and posters will be available in English and Spanish versions, and will also contain contact information for LACDMH’s 24/7 ACCESS line (1-800-854-7771). Since 2010, Metta World Peace and his nonprofit organization, XCEL University, have worked with LACDMH on several projects to decrease the stigma associated with getting help.

“It’s unnecessary stress if you’re holding things in,” said Metta World Peace. “It can just bring unnecessary stress to your heart and to your mind. When you can release it and talk about it, you feel better – and that’s how it should be with anything.”

**(More)**

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health is the largest county-operated mental health department in the United States, directly operating 75 program sites and more than 100 co-located sites. Each year, it contracts with approximately 1,000 agencies and individual practitioners to provide a spectrum of mental health services to more than 250,000 residents of all ages. The Department's mission -- enriching lives through partnership to strengthen our community's capacity to support recovery and resiliency -- is accomplished by working with stakeholders and community partners to provide clinically competent, culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate mental health services to clients in the least restrictive manner possible.

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